MEMOIRS

OF EXTRAORDINARY

POPULAR DELUSIONS.

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"THE THAMES AND ITS TRIBUTARIES," "THE HOPE OF THE WORLD," ETC.

"Il est bon de connaître les délires de l'esprit humain. Chaque peuple a ses folies plus ou moins grossières."

MILLOT.

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ers; but, as the court itself had begun to patronize curls, the fulminations of the church were unavailing. Henry I. and his nobles wore their hair in long ringlets down their backs and shoulders, and became a *scandalum magnatum* in the eyes of the godly. One Serlo, the King's chaplain, was so grieved in spirit at the impiety of his master, that he preached a sermon from the well-known text of St. Paul, before the assembled court, in which he drew so dreadful a picture of the torments that awaited them in the other world, that several of them burst into tears, and wrung their hair, as if they would have pulled it out by the roots. Henry himself was observed to weep. The priest, seeing the impression he had made, determined to strike while the iron was hot, and, pulling a pair of scissors from his pocket, cut the king's hair in presence of them all. Several of the principal courtiers consented to do the like, and, for a short time, long hair appeared to be going out of fashion. But the courtiers thought, after the first glow of their penitence had been cooled by reflection, that the clerical Dalilah had shorn them of their strength, and, in less than six months, they were as great sinners as ever.

Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been a monk of Bec, in Normandy, and who had signalized himself at Rouen by his fierce opposition to long hair, was still anxious to work a reformation in this matter. But his pertinacity was far

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from pleasing to the King, who had finally made up his mind to wear ringlets. There were other disputes, of a more serious nature, between them; so that when the Archbishop died, the King was so glad to be rid of him, that he allowed the see to remain vacant for five years. Still the cause had other advocates, and every pulpit in the land resounded with anathemas against that disobedient and long-haired generation. But all was of no avail. Stowe, in writing of this period, asserts, on the authority of some more ancient chronicler, "that men, forgetting their birth, transformed themselves, by the length of their haires, into the semblance of woman kind;" and that when their hair decayed from age, or other causes, "they knit about their heads certain rolls and braidings of false hair." At last accident turned the tide of fashion. A knight of the court, who was exceedingly proud of his beauteous locks, dreamed one night that, as he lay in bed, the devil sprang upon him, and endeavoured to choke him with his own hair. He started in affright, and actually found that he had a great quantity of hair in his mouth. Sorely stricken in conscience, and looking upon the dream as a warning from Heaven, he set about the work of reformation, and cut off his luxuriant tresses the same night. The story was soon bruited abroad; of course it was made the most of by the clergy, and the knight, being a man of influence and consideration, and the acknowledged leader of the

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fashion, his example, aided by priestly exhortations, was very generally imitated. Men appeared almost as decent as St. Wulstan himself could have wished, the dream of a dandy having proved more efficacious than the entreaties of a saint. But, as Stowe informs us, "scarcely was one year past, when all that thought themselves courtiers fell into the former vice, and contended with women in their long haires." Henry, the King, appears to have been quite uninfluenced by the dreams of others, for even his own would not induce him a second time to undergo a cropping from priestly shears. It is said, that he was much troubled at this time by disagreeable visions. Having offended the church in this and other respects, he could get no sound refreshing sleep, and used to imagine that he saw all the bishops, abbots, and monks of every degree, standing around his bed-side, and threatening to belabour him with their pastoral staves; which sight, we are told, so frightened him, that he often started naked out of his bed, and attacked the phantoms sword in hand. Grimbalde, his physician, who, like most of his fraternity at that day, was an ecclesiastic, never hinted that his dreams were the result of a bad digestion, but told him to shave his head, be reconciled to the Church, and reform himself with alms and prayer. But he would not take this good advice, and it was not until he had been nearly drowned a year afterwards, in a violent storm at sea, that he repented of his evil

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ways, cut his hair short, and paid proper deference to the wishes of the clergy.

In France, the thunders of the Vatican with regard to long curly hair were hardly more respected than in England. Louis VII. however, was more obedient than his brother-king, and cropped himself as closely as a monk, to the great sorrow of all the gallants of his court. His Queen, the gay, haughty, and pleasure-seeking Eleanor of Guienne, never admired him in this trim, and continually reproached him with imitating, not only the head-dress, but the asceticism of the monks. From this cause, a coldness arose between them. The lady proving at last unfaithful to her shaven and indifferent lord, they were divorced, and the Kings of France lost the rich provinces of Guienne and Poitou, which were her dowry. She soon after bestowed her hand and her possessions upon Henry Duke of Normandy, afterwards Henry II. of England, and thus gave the English sovereigns that strong footing in France which was for so many centuries the cause of such long and bloody wars between the nations.

When the Crusades had drawn all the smart young fellows into Palestine, the clergy did not find it so difficult to convince the staid burghers who remained in Europe, of the enormity of long hair. During the absence of Richard Cœur de Lion, his English subjects not only cut their hair close, but shaved their faces. William Fitzosbert,

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